



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE SOLICITS COOPERATION FROM COMPANIES

Companies may have been unwitting victims of forgery and fraud by P.J. Services LLC

TOPEKA, Kan. — Following a 24-count superceding indictment filed June 15 against a couple from South Africa accused of various acts of immigration fraud, the investigating federal agencies are soliciting information from companies that may also be victims of the couple's actions.



Petrus J. Botes, 50, and his girlfriend, Joyce Yvonne Coetzee, 39, both from South Africa, were originally charged in a June 1 seven-count indictment in the District of Kansas that was unsealed June 2. The couple was then charged with bringing in workers from South Africa on temporary work visas (H-2A) to work for employers other than those designated.

The couple resided in Bennington, Kan. They have been in custody since their arrest June 2 by the investigating agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General, Office of Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigations.

Following the unsealing of the original indictment, ICE special agents conducted a search of the couple's residence. The additional evidence discovered during this search led to the subsequent 24-count indictment. Their trial is scheduled for August.

Botes and Coetzee are suspected of forging signatures of U.S. employers on immigration and labor forms required in the filing process to obtain temporary work visas for foreign nationals. Employers

have told investigators that their signatures were sometimes forged, and that information contained in the visa applications had been fabricated. Furthermore, employers received foreign national workers that they had not petitioned for, and that they didn't need.

ICE special agents suspect that other companies may have had contact with the couple, and their company P.J. Services LLC. These companies may also have been unwitting victims of their alleged forgeries and false petitions. Companies that have had any dealings with Botes, Coetzee or P.J. Services should contact ICE directly at: 816-891-8351, ext. 174.

Botes and Coetzee formed P.J. Services LLC in Bennington, Kan., in 2001 to act as an agent to employers interested in obtaining foreign workers through the Department of Labor's (DOL) Foreign Labor Certification program. P.J. Services provided workers for agricultural and trucking operations in a seven-state region, which included: Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, and North and South Dakota. However, they impacted companies nationwide.

P.J. Services advertised in targeted agricultural U.S. publications. Employers who responded to the ads were allegedly informed that workers would be available within a week's notice. Then a petition was filed with DOL's Employment Training Administration to obtain H-2A Temporary Agricultural visas to bring South African workers to the U.S.

However, Botes and Coetzee are accused of filing these petitions for potential employers with or without their consent, and filing for more workers than employers actually needed. They're also accused of forging employers' signatures, and falsifying job descriptions and the nature of the businesses.

After receiving the visa approvals, Botes and Coetzee allegedly sent workers to employers that were not designated on the visa petitions. H-2A employment visas do not allow workers to change employers without authorization.

"Both Botes and Coetzee are accused of blatantly abusing immigration and labor laws with their scheme," said Elissa Brown, special-agent-in-charge of the ICE Chicago office. "The recent search of their residence by our ICE special agents showed even more criminal activity. We need other companies to come forward that also may have been victimized." Brown heads the six-state ICE Office of Investigations which includes the states of: Kansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri and Wisconsin.

The Honorable Gordon S. Heddell, Inspector General, United States Department of Labor, said: "Providing fraudulent information to obtain work visas compromises the integrity of the foreign labor certification program. My office will continue to work closely with other law enforcement agencies to combat those who encourage and enable illegal workers to enter this country."

Botes and Coetzee had also been convicted on visa charges in Kansas in 2002 and recently received final orders of deportation. Those orders will be reinstated following any trial that may take place. Should they be convicted on these charges, they would first serve the sentence that is imposed and then be deported.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.